

October 2nd, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier

Nehemiah 9:16-31- “God’s Longsuffering”

A. WSC 4. “What is God?”

“God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, & unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness & truth.”

B. The reason why we have this book of Nehemiah in the first place is because of God’s just discipline of His people as foretold by Solomon. When the people confessed their sin to God, He would **“make them *objects of compassion before those who have taken them captive*” (1 Ki 8:46-50).**

1. Despite local opposition including mocking & death threats & an assassination attempt, **Neh 6:15** says the wall was completed in 52 days.
2. In thanksgiving to God, the people worshipped which included the reading of immense portions of Scripture. That led to a conviction of sin and then public confession of sin which is found in this beautiful prayer written by the Levites (most of **Neh 9**). **v2** tells us why the Levites gave this long history of God’s mercy & His people’s sin. → **v2**

Praise God for His longsuffering with sinners.	I. <u>REPEATED WICKEDNESS IN RESPONSE TO GRACE</u> II. <u>GOD’S LONGSUFFERING WITH SINNERS</u>
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I. REPEATED WICKEDNESS IN RESPONSE TO GRACE In light of God’s blessings, the Jews time & time again responded with wickedness; **v16** gives us an overview: **“But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn & would not listen to Your commandments.”**

A. They rebelled after delivery from Egypt. → **v17**

B. They became wicked & blasphemous even after God gave them the promised land. → **vv22-26**

C. Because of their idolatry, God **“delivered them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them,” (v27).** Here they are recalling the repeated judges cycle. → middle of **v27-29**

D. For a time under Samuel, then under David, & through the beginning of Solomon’s reign, God gave Israel many years of peace & stability. Nevertheless, they went back to their wickedness & idolatry again. → **v30**

1. This refers to Israel’s captivity under Assyria & then Judah’s captivity under Babylon.
2. There is a repeated trend in history that God uses foreign nations to chastise His own people because of their sin. As America increasingly turns her back on God, don’t be surprised if God chastises us by means of a foreign power.

E. After considering the repeated history of their stubborn wickedness, many would have given up on such sinners as a hopeless cause. You should be thankful that God does not give up on sinners yet is instead longsuffering.

II. GOD'S LONGSUFFERING WITH SINNERS → The Holy Spirit inspired the Levites to write in **v17b**:
“...**You are a God of forgiveness, gracious & compassionate, slow to anger & abounding in lovingkindness; & You did not forsake them.**”

A. Turn to **Ex 33:18f** to see what happened when Moses asked God to see His glory.

1. The request: **v18**

2. The preparation: **vv19-23**

3. The glorious revelation: **Ex34:5-7** This passage is beautifully similar to **Neh 9:17b**, yet also emphasized God's righteousness & justice.

B. Yes, God was longsuffering with Israel before, after, & during their wilderness wanderings, yet some of them didn't enter into the promised land nor God's eternal rest because of unbelief according **Heb 3:16-19**.

C. Even at a great height of Israel's idolatry, God showed His great compassion as He continued to lead them. → **vv18-19**.

D. The middle of **v19** says how He miraculously guided them: “**the pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go.**”

E. **v20** tells us another way how God guided them: “**You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them,...**”

1. As a reminder, look back at how God guided them according to **v14**. [“**So U made known to them Ur holy sabbath, & laid down for them cmdnts, statutes & law dia Ur servant Moses.**”]

2. God has always led & continues to lead His people by means of His Word & Spirit.

F. God provided for their every essential need again according to **vv20-21**.

G. As we read earlier, God gave them the land He promised to the Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

H. Despite their sin & wickedness, God showed His lovingkindness & compassionate longsuffering to His chosen people; **v31** gives us an overview statement of the whole matter. → **v31**

Review, further application, & conclusion: